



CD 2004--65

Thursday, April 8, 2004
12:10 pm. Walter Hall

Thursdays at Noon
Presents

French Baroque Music and Dance

ARADIA ENSEMBLE

Kevin Mallon, violin; Alex Kehler, violin; Joan Harrison, cello; Mylene Guay, flute
J. Tracy Mortimore, violone; Borys Medicy, harpsichord
Marie-Nathalie Lacoursière, Baroque dance; Edgar Tumak, Baroque dance

Simphonia in G minor

Nicolas Clérambault (1676-1749)

Court tableau

Chaconne of Galathee

Choreography: A. L'Abbé
Music: From *Acis et Galatée* (1686), J.B. Lully

L'Astrée

François Couperin (1668-1733)

Descente a' Apolon

J.B. Lully

Entrée d' Apolon pour un homme

Choreography: L.G. Pecour (1704)
Music: From *Le Triomphe de l'Amour* (1681), J.B. Lully

Passacaille

Choreography : A. L'Abbé (1711)
Music: From *Armide* (1686), J.B. Lully

Theatrical tableau

Overture and Turkish March

Music: From *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (1670)
J.B. Lully

Turkish Dance

Choreography: A. L'Abbé (1725)
Music: From *L' Europe Gallant* (1697), Campra

Program Notes and Biographies

The music in today's concert is centered around the world of French Baroque music and dance. This was the era of The Sun King, Louis VI, Versailles and a type of opulence that is foreign to our 21st century. From the moment Louis VI took unto himself the destiny of France, he exercised a passion for order at all levels of society. In this regard he established the many academies that were to systematize the artistic and intellectual life of his regime. He established the Académie Royale de Danse (1661), Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres (1663), Académie des Sciences (1666) and the Académie Royale de Musique (1669). Perhaps because of this, we are lucky to have many innovations that, with careful research, can help us to recreate the art forms that existed. Hence we are here presenting music and dance from the 17th and early 18th centuries using a system of dance notation from the time that helps us to re-construct the choreography.

Presented today are glimpses of the different types of dance forms, from the use made by Rebel of the many dances (minuet, sarabande, passepied, gavottes, etc.) to the different types of settings - pastoral, court or theatrical. Whether the selections are taken from Pastorals, or from either Operas or Opera-ballets, it is important to emphasize that there was a close interaction between the dance, the music and the singing. The pastoral setting, was well adapted for its role in the creation of French opera. Its exploitation of tender, occasionally melancholy subject matter was ideally suited to the lyric stage; and its use of shepherds and shepherdesses in proximity to the gods introduced the opportunity for contrast which makes for effective theatre. Contrasting this is a more noble court setting (with a depiction of the Sun King himself in the *Entrée d' Apolon pour un homme*). Here we can see the effects of a Royal patron, and the more stylized and intricate footwork of the dancers.

Perhaps even more contrasting is the theatrical tableau, where we can see the form of the opera moving from the court into the opera house. This move became part of the result of the king's withdrawal from active social life (perhaps more the result of the pious Mme de Maintenon, than his own inclinations). Popular and often exotic material was used to whet the interest of the public. Besides the dances was the fine music written for them that is well able to stand on its own. Central to this was the mighty Lully, who had the greatest effect and control over music in the late 17th century. But this should not obscure the work of the others here presented.

Enjoy the concert!!!

KEVIN MALLON, MUSIC DIRECTOR - ARADIA ENSEMBLE

Irishman Kevin Mallon trained as a violinist, singer, composer and conductor. While studying with John Eliot Gardiner he became interested in performance on period instruments, and this in turn has led to a distinguished career as a violinist and conductor. Mr. Mallon has acted as concertmaster for Les Arts Florissants and Le Concert Spirituel in Paris, before taking up positions with Toronto's Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and the University of Toronto. He has a flourishing career as a conductor and has made twenty-five CDs for Naxos. He is also music director of the Toronto Camerata and undertakes many guest engagements worldwide. He has recently been appointed to the position of conductor of the Cork Opera in Ireland.

ARADIA ENSEMBLE

The Aradia Ensemble started life as a collective with a mixture of professional and amateur musicians. Under this guise they presented their first concert in June 1996. Under Music Director, Kevin Mallon, the group had considerable artistic success, with Mallon securing a recording contract with Naxos records. Within two years the groups' successes were such that the decision was made for the ensemble to become fully professional. As such, the Aradia Ensemble was reborn in January 1998.

The Aradia Ensemble has rapidly become one of the most exciting new groups to emerge in the early music world, presenting an eclectic blend of orchestral, operatic and chamber music played on original instruments. The repertoire of Aradia is varied and expansive, ranging from the music of 17th- century Europe to the Rocco and early Classical, as well as contemporary pieces commissioned by the group. They have collaborated with baroque dancers, Isadora Duncan dancers, and specialists in Commedia dell'arte in addition to more esoteric projects (including one with Indonesian gamelan).

Aradia presents their Toronto concerts, featuring the best of young Canadian, instrumentalists, singers, dancers and other performers, at the spectacular Glenn Gould Studio. In July 2000, the Aradia Ensemble completed its first international tour as the featured artist at the International Chamber Music Festival in New Zealand. In July 2003, the ensemble travelled to Tuscany, Italy to take part in the opera festival, "Musica nel Chiostro."

Aradia Ensemble is currently the busiest recording ensemble in Canada, having completed 18 CDs for Naxos records including the recent release of Aradia's first full length opera, Rameau's *Castor and Pollux*. In addition to this work, Aradia has made two music videos and a film soundtrack.

The ensemble's recordings have achieved international critical acclaim: The second CD, *Ballet Music for the Sun King by Jean-Baptiste Lully*, was chosen as "Record of the Month" in the September 1998 issue of Classic FM magazine. The American Record Guide November/December 2001 review of Aradia's Bach cantata CD stated, "These performances compare favorably with ones directed by Koopman, Suzuki, Gardiner, Herreweghe and a host of eminent early music specialists." In March of 2004 Aradia was featured in a full page profile in the BBC magazine. Also in June of 2004 the Gramophone magazine will run a feature on the group.

In mythology, Aradia was the daughter of Apollo's twin sister Diana. She was sent by the gods to teach mankind to order the music of the natural world into song.